

**DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION**

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**AGENDA ITEM # 11**

November 6, 1998

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: Delta as a Separate Tourism Region

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**BACKGROUND:**

The State of California has set up a tourism promotion program within the California Trade and Commerce Agency. The California Travel and Tourism Commission is a nonprofit mutual benefit corporation set up largely to promote tourism from other areas into California, and also to promote travel within the State. The Commission is funded partially by the State and partially by assessments paid by tourism-oriented businesses. The Commission publishes "California Official State Visitor's Guide", responds to travel inquiries, and gives financial assistance to the 12 tourism regions to assist in advertising and marketing the 12 tourism regions. The 37-member Commission includes one representative of each of the 12 regions and 24 elected commissioners representing the assessed businesses. The Secretary of Trade and Commerce serves as the Chairman of the Commission.

The existing 12 regions include: Shasta Cascade, North Coast, Central Valley, Gold Country, San Francisco Bay Area, High Sierra, Central Coast, Deserts, Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Diego County, and Inland Empire. Most of the Delta is within the Central Valley area; Sacramento County is in the Gold Country; and Pittsburg and Antioch are in the San Francisco Bay Area region (see attached maps).

## **DELTA RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES:**

The Delta Protection Commission's 1997 Inventory of Recreational Facilities identified many private and public recreation facilities including: 75 boat launch facilities; over 40 sites with camping; over 55 picnic sites (many within marinas); over 40 developed fishing sites; 12 registered historic sites; more than 25 hunting clubs (most are private); over 100 marinas providing over 12,000 boat berths; a few shoreline trails; several windsurfing access sites along the lower Sacramento River. Public sites and wildlife areas include: Cosumnes River Preserve; Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area; Jepsen Prairie Preserve; White Slough Wildlife Area; Delta Meadows River Park; and Brannan Island State Recreation Area. The Delta Protection Commission's inventory did not include restaurants, lodging, boat rentals, bait shops, or other commercial facilities that would provide visitor services.

## **PROPOSAL OF THE CALIFORNIA DELTA CHAMBERS AND VISITORS BUREAU:**

The California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau (Delta Chambers) is a regional organization with 200 business and local chamber of commerce members and 50 "boosters" (individual members). Member businesses are located throughout the Delta and adjacent communities. Their members are largely recreational-associated businesses and include several wineries in the Lodi and Clarksburg areas.

The Delta Chambers is disappointed that the Delta is divided between different tourism areas and is proposing that the Delta be unified in a single tourism area. The boundary they are proposing is slightly larger than the Primary Zone and includes waterfront areas in the City of Sacramento north to the Garden Highway, and would include the Suisun Marsh area and the City of Suisun. To promote the Delta as a whole, the Delta Chambers recently published a new 77 page brochure paid for with advertising in the brochure, and has created a web page ([www.californiadelta.org](http://www.californiadelta.org)).

The area to be defined as "the Delta" includes the many waterways and undeveloped islands in the Primary Zone and the Cities/Communities of Suisun, Rio Vista, West Sacramento, Clarksburg, portions of Sacramento, Courtland, Locke, Walnut Grove, Hood, Isleton, Lodi, Stockton, Lathrop, Tracy, Oakley, Brentwood, Pittsburg, and Antioch. The area would not include: Cities of Fairfield, Vacaville, Dixon, Davis, or Galt. The final list of participating communities will depend upon local support.

While the Delta Chambers is interested in eventually becoming a separate tourism region, which would include a separate listing in the State Guide Book and eligibility for tourism funds from the State of California, now the primary goal is to have the Delta identified as a separate tourism area within the Central Valley region. The Delta area is defined by the areas adjacent to waterways and oriented toward boating, fishing, hunting and associated outdoor activities, and nearby agricultural communities.

To date, the Delta Chambers has had several telephone conversations with the Director of Tourism. In response to a written request from the Delta Chambers to recognize the Delta as one integral tourism area, the California Trade and Commerce Agency has agreed to consider consolidating the Delta into one region, as part of the Central Valley area. The Trade and Commerce Agency has asked that all affected local communities adopt a position of support for this change, and that letters expressing that support be forwarded to the Trade and Commerce Agency (letter dated October 13, 1998).

#### **REQUEST OF THE DELTA CHAMBERS:**

The Delta Chambers has asked that the Delta Protection Commission support the Chambers' proposal to the State Division of Tourism that the Delta be described and promoted as a single unit, not be divided up into several tourism regions.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE DELTA PROTECTION ACT:**

The Delta Protection Act states "the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a natural resource of statewide, national and international significance, containing irreplaceable resources , and it is the policy of the state to recognize, preserve and protect those resources of the delta for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations" (PRC, Section 29701) and "the delta's waterways and marinas offer recreational opportunities of statewide and local significance and are a source of economic benefit to the region...recreational boating within the delta is of statewide and local significance and is a source of economic benefit to the region..."(PRC, Section 29712). The proposed action would serve to better inform those in the state and visiting the state of the "irreplaceable resources" of the Delta and allow those to "use and enjoy" those resources.

The August 1997 Recreational User Survey, prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreational for the Delta Protection Commission and the Department of Boating and Waterways, found that Delta visitors come from all over the State of California resulting in millions of recreational user days in the Delta. Those surveyed who live within a one hour drive of the Delta and do not recreate in the Delta stated they are not familiar with Delta recreation opportunities.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Delta Protection Commission after receiving public comment, consider sending a letter to the State Department of Trade and Commerce urging that future visitor guide books for the State of California identify the Delta as a region, and describe its public and private recreational resources in one cohesive section, rather than splitting the description of Delta recreation resources between different areas, as is currently the case (see attached draft letter).

**DRAFT**

**John R. Poimiroo, Deputy Secretary  
California Trade and Commerce Agency  
801 K Street, Suite 1918  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**Subject: Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as a Separate Tourism Region**

**Dear Mr. Poimiroo:**

The California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau has asked the Delta Protection Commission to support its request that the Delta be consolidated into one tourism region under your agency's marketing and outreach programs. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a unique recreational, wildlife habitat and agricultural resource within the State of California; a region which provides a variety of opportunities for recreational activities for California residents and visitors alike.

The Delta Protection Commission recently completed an inventory of private and public recreational resources in the Delta and identified 75 boat launch facilities; over 40 sites with camping; over 55 picnic sites (many within marinas); over 40 developed fishing sites; 12 registered historic sites; more than 25 hunting clubs (most are private); over 100 marinas providing over 12,000 boat berths; a few shoreline trails; several windsurfing access sites along the lower Sacramento River. Public sites and wildlife areas include: Cosumnes River Preserve; Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area; Jepsen Prairie Preserve; White Slough Wildlife Area; Delta Meadows River Park; and Brannan Island State Recreation Area. In addition, there are numerous restaurants, bait shops, and other facilities to serve visitors to the area. Numerous wineries dot the northern and eastern edge of the Delta providing a unique visiting experience which takes advantage of the agricultural bounty of the region.

The Delta Protection Commission urges the Trade and Commerce Agency to consider and implement the request of the Chambers to maximize information dissemination about this unique geographic area and tourism region.

Sincerely,

**Patrick N. McCarty  
Chairman**





